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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
 THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

1. From December 1951 to December 1952 the Chinese Communists held about 3,000 prisoners in a prison in the Taoli District of Harbin. About 20 percent of these prisoners were Koreans, White Russians, Japanese, and a few Yugoslavians, Poles, and Germans; the rest were Chinese. About 300 of the prisoners were women, many with babies; these included Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and White Russians. The ages of the prisoners ranged from 15 to 70 years.
2. The prison in Taoli District included a building, called the Fourth Cell Block building, which was said to be for political prisoners only. In 1952 there were about 250 prisoners in this building.
3. The Taoli Prison operated a prison farm at Hsinhsiangfang on the outskirts of Harbin where some prisoners were held. Many prisoners were also sent from Taoli prison to work in the factories and mines of Ach'eng (N 45-33, E 126-57) and Chiamussu (N 46-49, E 130-21) areas.
4. Organization of the prison command consisted of sections for: management, education, production, and health. The commander of the prison and all other persons in charge, except a Russian heading the health section and one Korean, were Chinese. The prison wardens, including the women wardens, wore police uniforms with a badge with characters for Chinese people's police. Each staff member wore an army uniform with a badge with characters for the Chinese Communist Army on the left arm and a badge with characters for the public security forces on the right arm.

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5. The prison was guarded by a platoon of public security troops, members of which stood armed duty on a watch tower at each of the four corners of the compound, one at the outer gate and one at the inner gate, and one in a pillbox. Unarmed wardens watched the prisoners at work. About ten wardens were stationed in the corridors of the Fourth Cell Block Building since this building housed political prisoners. Two prison guards of the public security platoon were assigned to this building, also, since the security measures were strict.
6. The prison compound was at the north end of Chungang Street, approximately 600 meters south of the bank of the Sungari River.² It was surrounded by thick grey brick walls, five meters high, with five strands of electrically charged barbed wire on top. The compound was rectangular, about 300 meters from east to west and 250 meters from north to south. Attachment A is a sketch of the compound.
7. From the main entrance in the eastern wall of the compound a path about 15 meters long led past the entrance to the prison office building to the south of the path and past the production office building to the north of it. About 70 meters to the west of the main entrance was a gate of wood and steel, leading to a workshop area. This area was about 100 meters by 250 meters. In it were the following: a print shop, a bristle shop, a steel working shop, a carpenter shop, a tailor shop, a thread-making shop, and a textile shop.
8. In the rest of the compound, to the west of the shop area and beyond a thick wall, was an area about 130 meters by 250 meters in which were the cell block buildings of the prison. In the center of this area was a clear space about 70 meters by 100 meters; on the side nearest the wall of this space was a concrete pillbox. On the north side of the clear space were at least three cell block buildings; on the south side were the Fourth Cell Block Building, a hospital, a kitchen, a bath house, a boiler room, and a toilet. These buildings, except for the cell block building, were about 5 to 10 meters long; some were one story and some two stories. They had brick or concrete walls and flat roofs.
9. The Fourth Cell Block Building was two stories or about 10 meters high, approximately 60 meters long, 9 meters wide, and had cement walls. Through its length ran a corridor about 3 meters wide, on each side of which were 50 cells. Most of the cells were 3 meters long, by 2.5 meters wide, by 5 meters high; some were larger and some were smaller. The entrance to each cell was through a steel door 1.5 meters high and 80 centimeters wide; there was a hole 5 centimeters in diameter through which the wardens looked in from time to time. On the back wall was a window 70 centimeters high and 1 meter wide; it had iron bars and was covered with wood inside so that a prisoner could not see out, but some light could come in. One meter inside the door was floored with cement; the rest of the cell was raised one meter with a wooden floor. (See Attachments B and C.)
10. Nearly all the political prisoners, whether or not they had been tried and convicted, were kept in the Fourth Cell Block Building. This building was called a prison within a prison, since the treatment of the prisoners was harsh and they were under strict watch. Some prisoners were held for more than a year awaiting trial. Most of them did not know why they had been arrested. Even the wardens were sometimes surprised to hear how prisoners had been detected and caught. After the counter-revolutionary law was promulgated in April 1951, many suspected criminals were put into the prison without trial.

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11. Prisoners in the other cell block building, unless they were political prisoners, were made to work during the day for eight hours. A self-controlling system under the guidance of the Education Section had been organized. As in any factory, productive teams were organized in an attempt to raise efficiency by competition. Prisoners, other than political prisoners, also had recreational meetings; they sang together before bed-time and occasionally were shown movies.
12. Prisoners operated the work shops. In the print shop, secret documents of the government were printed. This shop bound bookkeeping forms and did job orders for commercial firms in Harbin. In the bristle shop, the best organized and equipped shop in the prison, bristles were cleaned and sorted for the Chung Kuo Tu Ts'an Kung Ssu,⁵ which supplied the raw material. The steel-working factory repaired machine and engine parts. Some of the prisoners also worked at the steel plant at Sankuashui, Harbin. On the outskirts of Harbin, at Hsinhsiangfang, some prisoners worked at the prison farm. Most of the products were used at the Taoli District prison and any surplus was distributed by a company under the jurisdiction of the food administration. The farm-labor prisoners, also said to number about 3,000, lived at a camp near the farm.
13. The self-controlling system, for prisoners not suspected of political crimes, was organized with a leader and staff members chosen from among the prisoners. The purpose of the organization was to help the prisoners obey the regulations, to guide them in their political culture, and to heighten their efficiency in the shops. For political culture the prisoners had a study hour from 1930 to 2030 hours daily, each group in its own cell. The leaders were prisoners, and a booklet on the Chinese Communist Party and government was used. To improve discipline and to increase efficiency in the shops, meetings were held at which those who had been idle in the day's work were reproached and those who had been diligent were praised. The model worker was not only honored, but his sentence was shortened. A prisoner who was consistently idle and who violated the regulations of the prison was considered to be opposed to the government, and his sentence was extended.
14. On Sundays and on some holidays, recreational meetings were held. A team of artists, made up among the prisoners, taught Communist songs, including one entitled "Chinese Peoples Volunteer Army Song." Some of the themes were "resist America, aid Korea," and oppose the rearmament of Japan. This team also produced plays or variety shows on some holidays. The prisoners edited and printed a newspaper, A New Life. The principal purpose of this paper was to give ideological training and to heighten enthusiasm for increasing production. Prisoners supposedly could propose reforms for unjust administration or for mistreatment by the wardens.
15. Once a month the prisoners were allowed visits, for five minutes each, with friends or relatives. At such times they met in a visiting room under the watch of a warden. Once every two months they could send or receive mail; occasionally they could get food, clothes, and other things from relatives. These privileges, except the receipt of food from time to time, were not granted to prisoners in the Fourth Cell Block Building. Certain of the political prisoners were not allowed even food from outside. Food sent to the prison on holidays was distributed equally to all prisoners. On Sundays in the cells the working prisoners were allowed to talk and to sing, privileges denied them on other days. Political prisoners were never allowed to talk to each other in the cells.

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16. Except to prisoners still waiting trial, new clothing with a cap of red cotton was issued, once in the summer and once in the winter. Bedding was not supplied; but if it was sent by friends or relatives, it could be used. Prisoners waiting trial used what clothes they brought in with them or received from outside.
17. Prisoners were allowed to bathe once a month in the bath house 50 meters east of the Fourth Cell Block Building. They bathed for ten minutes under strict guard. Once a month they washed their clothes at a laundry near the bath house. A prisoner barber cut each man's hair once a month. Members of the security force cut the hair of political prisoners once a month, and once a month in their cells political prisoners washed their clothes with water brought to them.
18. Each cell was cleaned and sterilized by the prison hospital nurse every two days; in the Fourth Cell Block Building this work was done by a warden. When a prisoner was sick, he could obtain treatment at the hospital, to which he was led by wardens. The hospital was connected to the Fourth Cell Block Building, was 20 meters long from east to west, 6 meters wide, and 10 meters high, with red brick walls and a flat concrete roof. It contained 10 wards, a surgery room, an internal medicine treatment room, and a pharmacy. Besides the Russian chief of the section, there were five or six doctors and about twenty nurses among the prisoners. Only infectious and critically sick patients were admitted to the ward; other sick patients were allowed to lie down in their cells. Political prisoners were admitted to the ward if they were seriously ill. Political patients were treated in their cells and in the ward by a member of the medical section of the security unit. Prisoners with minor ailments could ask for their needs from the wardens. In mid-1952 there were about 50 patients in the wards, mostly suffering from tuberculosis, intestinal diseases, rheumatism, inflammation of the lymphatics, and pleurisy. These patients were served porridge three times a day. Seriously sick patients received rice porridge, others millet. In addition, patients were served the soup the other prisoners received. Dying patients were released from the prison if guarantors could be found.
19. The daily schedule of the prison life of the Fourth Cell Block Building never varied. At 0530 all prisoners arose. The wardens brought water for washing only the face, one basin for each cell regardless of the number of prisoners in the cell. The warden carried in enough drinking water for each prisoner to have one bowl. Prisoners then went to the toilet, one cell at a time. The toilet was about 40 meters to the east of the Fourth Cell Block Building. Five minutes was allowed for each man. Wardens stood at important corners. At 0800 hours the prisoners ate; a convicted prisoner brought the food from the kitchen, and the wardens distributed it to the cells. At noon the prisoners again went to the toilet, following the same procedure as in the morning. At 1530 hours they again ate and were again allowed to go to the toilet. At 2100 hours they went to sleep. When preparing to go to sleep they had to turn their faces toward the door to the corridor; they were not allowed to cover their faces, and a light shone on them all night. The wardens peered into the room from time to time.
20. Both meals for the prisoners of the Fourth Cell Block Building consisted of sorghum meal and a bowl of soup made from beans, radishes, or pumpkins.⁶ The quality of the meal was occasionally very poor, although almost enough food was given the prisoners. On holidays, such as 1 June, 1 May, and 1 October, sorghum and rice were mixed with meat or pork soup. Prisoners,

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other than those in the Fourth Cell Block Building, got three meals a day of the same food but of higher quality and as much as they could eat. When they filled their work production quotas, they got white rice. They also received meat soup once a month.

21. For the welfare of the prisoners there was a cooperative shop financed with the money prisoners had with them when taken and with money sent by relatives and friends. Up to the limit of his investment, a prisoner could obtain anything, such as meat, bread, candy, eggs, beansauce, soy, salt, garlic, oil, fish, fruit, towels, socks, toilet soap, needles, shoes, and stationery. The towels were made at the prison. Employees and managers of the shop were prisoners under the control of the prison administration. When a stock of commodities was received, every cell was notified by an employee of the shop; then prisoners bought what they wished with a note handed to a representative of the shop in each cell. Prisoners in the Fourth Cell Block Building bought things through the warden; sometimes the shopkeeper brought things to the political prisoners. Profit from the cooperative shop was used to obtain medicines for the hospital.

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Comments

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1. In this report the word warden has been substituted for guard in the original report wherever the context indicates that the person is in charge of the prisoners rather than of the security of the prison and where the individual appears to be a member of the civil public security unit rather than the military public security forces unit. The term for the others has been retained as guards.
2. A sketch of the compound provided by Source (see Attachment A) shows that it is in line with the Sungari River south bank and the Harbin railroad station. According to the town plan of Harbin in JANIS, No. 74, Chapter VIII, dated January 1946, there was a prison on this line and about this far from the river. It should be noted that information for the JANIS town plan was mostly dated before 1941.
3. Additional information about the compound supplied by Attachment A includes the approximate locations, shapes, and relationships of the Fourth Cell Block Building and nearby buildings and an additional toilet to the north of the clear space; a "temporary door," apparently similar to the gate described in paragraph 7, between the shop area and the cell block building area; a wall running east and west dividing the Fourth Cell Block Building area from the other cell block buildings, here labelled "numbered unknown," with a gate near its eastern end; extension of the 15-meter path mentioned in paragraph 7 from the entrance to the compound to the door leading to the cell block building area; and a storage area next to the production office building; see paragraph 7.
4. Attachment B adds much detail to the description of the Fourth Cell Block Building. Attachment C adds nothing significant to the description of a typical cell, except a steam pipe and radiator; nothing, however, was said about these being charged with steam at any time.
5. The Chung Kuo Tu Ts'an Kung Ssu is possibly an incorrect romanization for Chung Kuo T'u Ch'an Kung Szu (0022/0948/0960/3934/0361/0674, China National Native Products Company).
6. Radishes may be a mistranslation for turnips, and pumpkins for squash.
7. Although received with the romanization Tung Men, this is probably Tung Wen College, a Sino-Japanese commercial education institution which was at 1954 Avenue Haig, Shanghai, until the end of World War II.
8. This reasoning was probably that of the Chinese Catholic priest.

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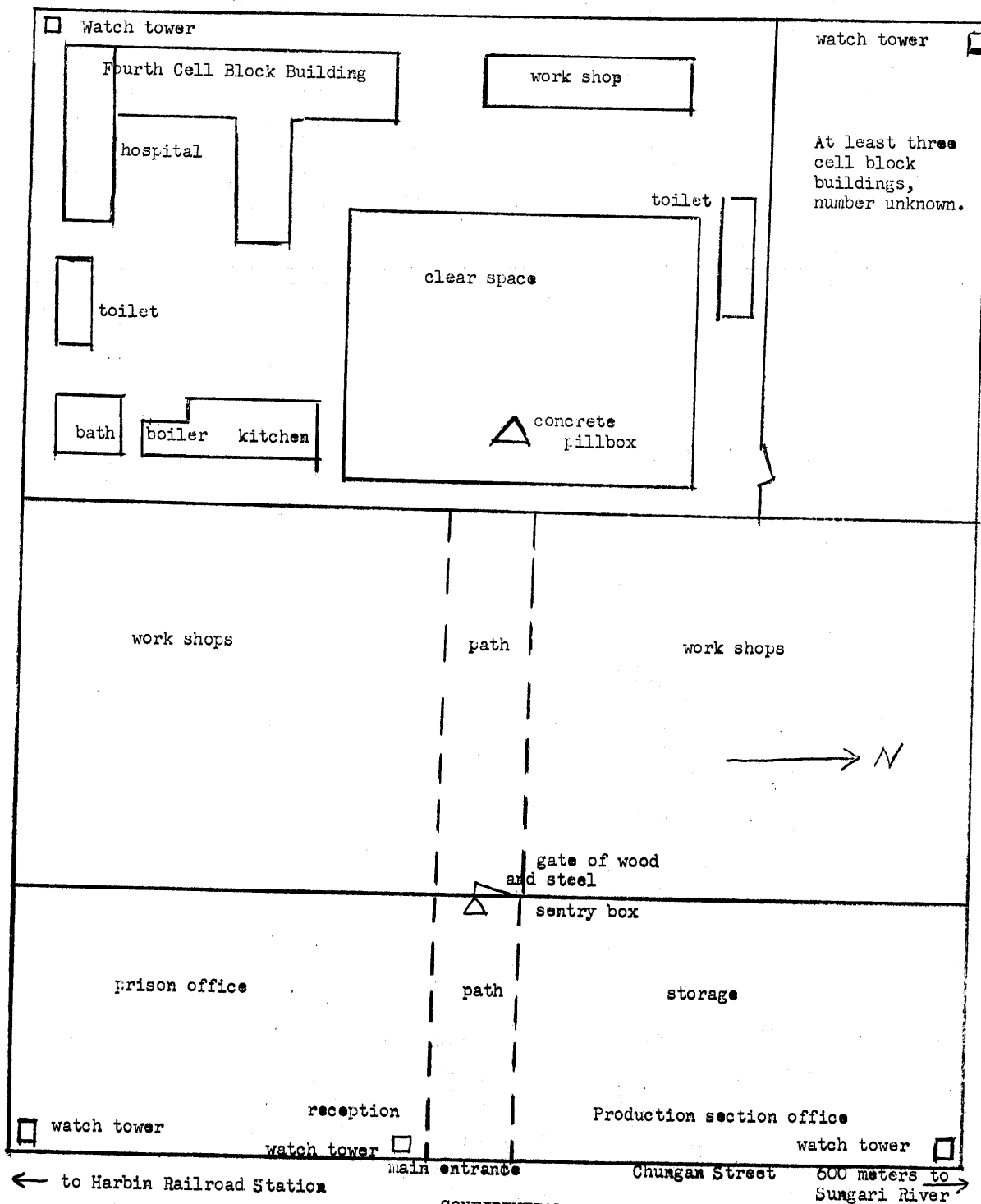
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ATTACHMENT A

(Sketch of the compound)



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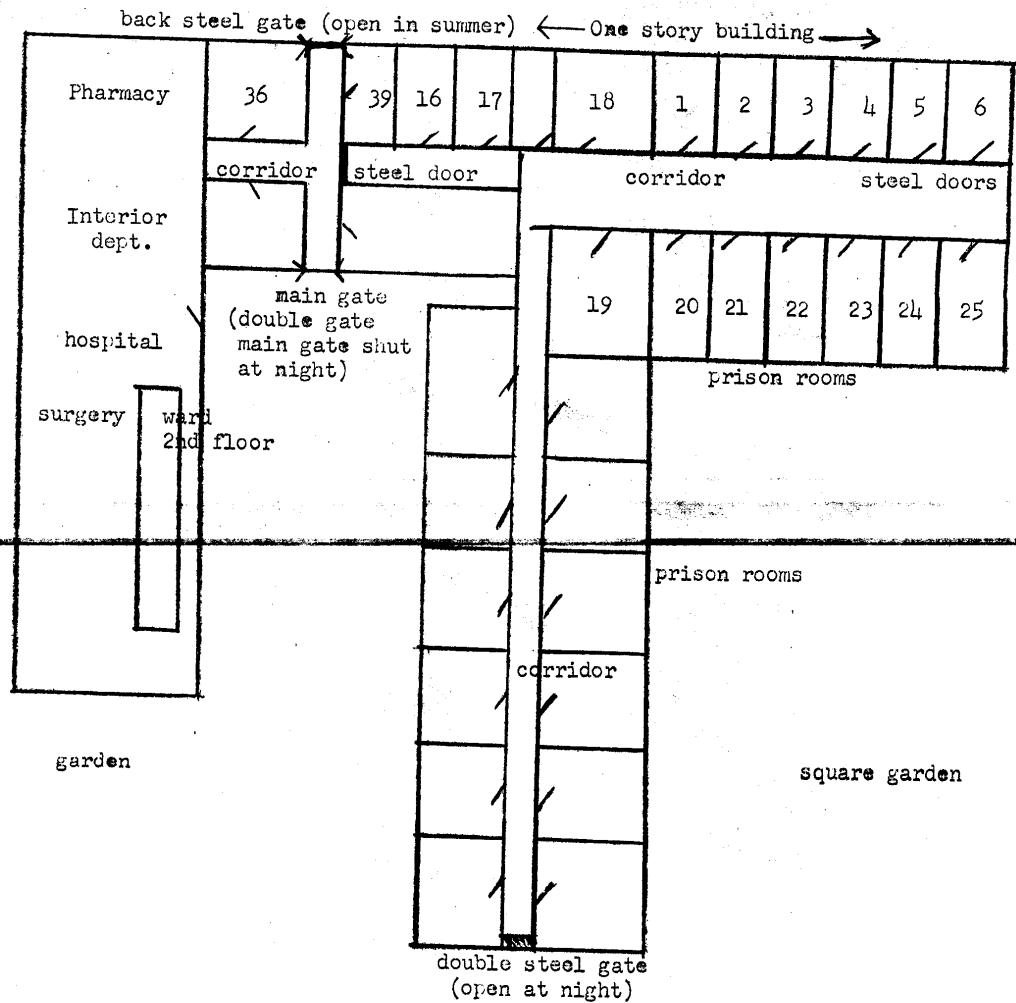
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ATTACHMENT B

Description of Fourth Cell Block Building



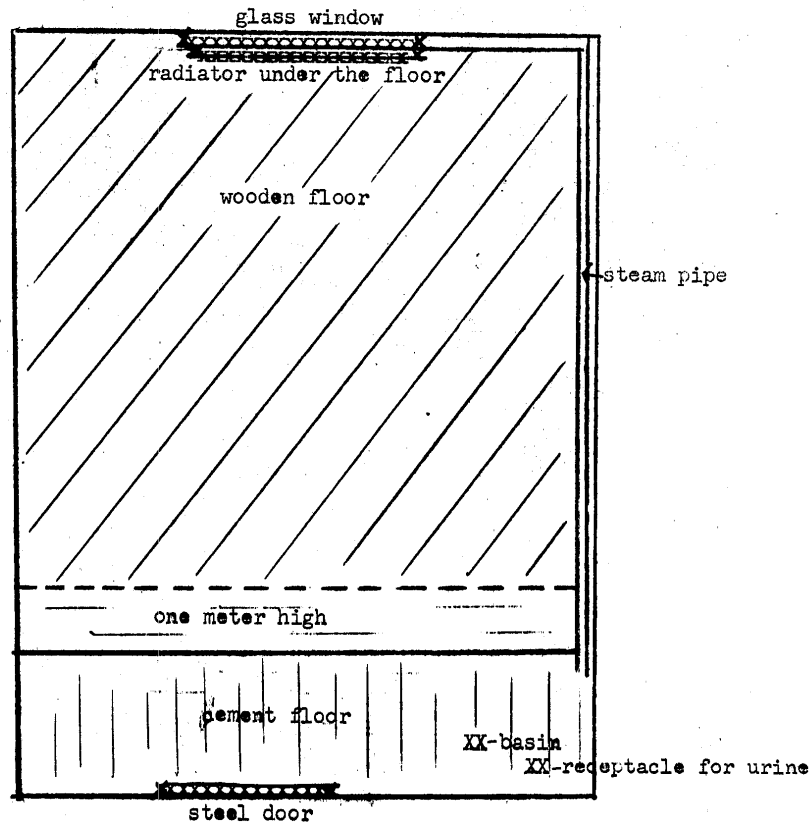
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ATTACHMENT C

Description of Number one prison room in Fourth Cell Block Building



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